

Greetings;

I want to share some positive agency news with you regarding our continuing efforts to make our facilities safe and secure for youth and staff. In October, the five TJJD facilities that underwent PREA audits this summer were all certified as PREA-compliant. This is a remarkable accomplishment for each of those facilities, for the agency, and for everyone who took part in preparing for the PREA audit. It is also something every TJJD staff member should take great pride in.

The five TJJD facilities receiving certification are:

- Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex in Brownwood;
- Evins Regional Juvenile Center in Edinburg;
- Brownwood Halfway House in Brownwood;
- McFadden Ranch Halfway House in Roanoke; and
- Edna Tamayo Halfway House in Harlingen.

Successfully completing a PREA audit is a rigorous process and requires a sustained commitment from a great number of people. The process began in August 2013 and required non-stop preparation and participation for the next 14 months. I would like to thank and recognize the following individuals who worked so hard to have their facilities prepared for this audit:

- Ron Jackson – Superintendent April Jameson and Compliance Officer Karen Pittman-Saucillo
- Brownwood House – Superintendent Jerome Finley
- McFadden Ranch – Superintendent Jimmie Prince and Compliance Officer Sherlon Didier
- Tamayo House – Superintendent Raymond Gonzalez and Compliance Officer Carlos Garcia
- Evins – Superintendent Donald Brooks and Compliance Officer Felix Garza

These leaders, along with the numerous managers, administrative staff, and JCOs and treatment staff, worked diligently to prepare for this top-to-bottom audit. It also demonstrates their commitment to youth and staff safety and to national best practices.

Another person deserving recognition for this accomplishment is TJJD's PREA Coordinator Jerome Williams. Jerome has been the agency's PREA expert since 2011, working with every facility on PREA-related initiatives. He is also a DOJ-certified PREA auditor and TJJD has benefitted greatly from his professionalism and thoroughness. Jerome was instrumental in working with superintendents and others to ensure readiness for the PREA audits, reviewing checklists, providing on-going technical assistance, conducting mock audits and even scheduling official audits. He is also currently working with county probation departments, providing PREA certification consultations to those who have requested assistance.

The next facilities scheduled for PREA audits are Gainesville and Giddings, Shaeffer House, Ayres House and York House. Those audits will take place in early 2015.

TJJD's compliance of PREA standards follows on the heels of the PREA compliance certification of the Victoria County Regional Juvenile Justice Facility, operated by the Victoria County Juvenile Probation Department. That facility received its certification this past September, making it the first county facility in Texas to meet the new national standards.

I congratulate Victoria County Juvenile Probation Chief Pama Hencerling, Assistant Chief Kelly Arnecke, Facility Administrator Lynette Acuna, PREA Coordinator Regina Perez and Intake Officer Debra Tomas as well as their staff for volunteering for and successfully completing this important audit.

I am proud of the dedication of our staff and our county partners to have willingly taken the initiative to address PREA requirements. This is another milestone in the history of our agency and juvenile justice in Texas in which we should all take great pride.

David